

**MINUTES OF THE  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 6, 2001**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, November 6, 2001, at 1:00 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by Chairperson Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. A list of action items is given in Attachment A and the list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified in the committee's previously distributed meeting agenda.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Ms. Burmeister called the Proficiency Testing (PT) committee meeting to order after attendance roll call.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

***Minutes***

The minutes from the teleconferences of September 25, 2001 and October 9, 2001, were reviewed and accepted as written.

***Action Items***

The action items from the September 25, 2001 and October 9, 2001, were updated as follows:

September 25, 2001 - Ms. Burmeister reported status of the action items:

- (1) Uniform electronic report format is ongoing.
- (2) Mr. Mike Miller drafted guidance criteria for adding analytes and methods to the master code lists.
- (3) Ms. Burmeister e-mailed a copy of the Hanlon/Longest letter to the PT Committee
- (4) Email lists for accrediting authorities and laboratories were obtained.
- (5) Ms. Burmeister drafted a letter to the PT Providers, AAs and labs requesting data on problematic analytes for the committee's review.
- (6) Mr. Mudambi drafted a response and emailed it to Ms. Burmeister.

October 9, 2001 - Ms. Burmeister reported the status of the action items:

- (1) Uniform electronic report format is ongoing.
- (2) Mr. Mike Miller drafted guidance criteria for adding analytes and methods to the master code lists. This will be finalized during the teleconference today.
- (3) The analyte group presentation for NELAC 7i is in progress.

- (4) Mr. Miller was not able to poll the NELAP Accrediting Authorities regarding analyte groups as of yet. Ms. Haynes will poll the AAs during today's teleconference which follows this call.
- (5) Ms. Burmeister sent the memo to the PT Providers, AAs and labs requesting data on problematic analytes.

### ***PT Reporting Limits***

Ms. Burmeister has been unable to contact Ms. Cindy Nettrour to update status of the PT Reporting Limit Subcommittee. It was determined that Ms. Marykay Steinman would take over for Ms. Nettrour. She will contact Mr. Chuck Wibby and the other team members (Mr. Matt Caruso, Mr. Mike Miller, Mr. Tom McAninch and Mr. Ed Glick) and update this committee on the process of the work done on PT Reporting Limits by the next teleconference.

### ***Analyte Groups***

Chapter 1 Update - Ms. Burmeister reported that she had updated Dr. Kenneth Jackson and Chapter 1 on what the Proficiency Testing Committee would be presenting at the NELAC-7i Conference regarding the advantages and disadvantages of analyte groups. Both Chapter 1 and PT committees are in agreement that there are few advantages to analyte groups. Mr. Art Burton, a Chapter 1 committee member stated that laboratories are looking to analyte groups to relieve some of the problems with PT failures, especially with the early eluters that tend to fail PT because they jump around. Mr. Burton was very encouraged that the PT committee is looking into analytes with problematic acceptance criteria. Since the Chapter 1 NELAC 7i session follows the PT session, the analyte group discussion will be placed near the end of the PT session agenda, so discussion can continue into the Chapter 1 session if necessary. Chapter 1 will place analyte groups on their agenda first.

PT Session Presentation Update - Ms. Haynes will continue to prepare the presentation regarding analyte groups for the NELAC-7i Conference.

### ***Analyte and Method Code SOP***

Mr. Mike Miller e-mailed the revised SOP to the PT Committee for review. The committee determined that no further changes are required prior to the NELAC-7i Conference. This document will be included in the participant packet for discussion.

### ***Problematic Analytes and Acceptance Criteria Update***

Ms. Burmeister sent all correspondence received regarding problematic analytes to the committee for review. So far, responses were received from four laboratories, two accrediting authorities and two PT providers. Ms. Burmeister will send a reminder email to the PT Providers. Ms. Burmeister received an offer from Mr. Tom Coyner to crunch all the data that the PT Committee accumulates. Mr. Ed Kantor is sending to Ms. Burmeister a CD that contains data for approximately 116 PT studies. These include drinking water, waste water, and DMRQA studies. The data is in a SAS-6 format. If Ms. Burmeister can access the database, she will convert it to an ASCII file so it can be

loaded into Mr. Coyner's system. Ms. Burmeister has also requested data from NIST.

### ***NELAC-7i PT Committee Session Agenda***

The committee reviewed the agenda for NELAC-7i. Ms. Steinman will head the PT Reporting Limits session in place of Ms. Nettrour. Ms. Burmeister stated that she will also give an update on the EPA Database/Criteria Document issues but is awaiting word from the Board of Directors as to the status.

### ***Comments/Questions***

Chuck Hoover, Southwest Laboratory of Oklahoma - New York State PT Grading - Mr. Hoover questioned the interpretation of the Standard as it relates to the acceptable/not acceptable status of an analyte with as assigned value of zero and to verify that New York is in accordance with NELAC requirements. Ms. Burmeister reported that she had e-mailed this letter to NYS and received a response. First, it was determined that the laboratory had left the result field blank when there should be some indication that an analyte was 'not detected'. Secondly the committee found that this is so confusing to laboratories because NYS provides both PT provider (results and status) information and Accrediting Authority (PT requirement judgement) information on their PT report. No other PT provider can do that. This is also confusing to other AAs when a laboratory requests that NYS send their report to the second

AA. Ms. Burmeister will follow up with Mr. Matt Caruso and Dr. Jackson regarding a way to ease the confusion to laboratories and accrediting authorities.

Letter to New Jersey Laboratories - Ms. Burmeister discussed a letter from Mr. Joe Aiello to New Jersey accredited labs. New Jersey has contracted with one or more PT providers and are including proficiency testing fees in the New Jersey accreditation fees. Mr. Miller stated that New Jersey accredited labs must use the contracted PT samples unless they provide justification to the accreditation program. Ms. Burmeister stated that Chapter 2 requires a NELAP Accrediting Authority to accept PT results from any NIST-accredited PT provider for a NELAP accredited laboratory. Mr. Miller assured the committee that New Jersey will accept PT results for New Jersey NELAP labs from any NIST-accredited PT provider.

New Method Codes - Mr. Ralph Obenauf stated that SPEX is still sending electronic files without method codes. At the last annual meeting, the PT Committee encouraged PT providers to use the new method codes. At the NIST/EPA PT Caucus, NIST also encouraged using the new method codes since the EPA Criteria Document states that method codes will be developed by NELAC. Ms. Burmeister will e-mail Ms. Reenie Parris of NIST to ask for assistance in getting the PT Providers to use the codes.

### ***Other Issues/Items***

Ms. Burmeister reviewed the NELAC Policy on Participation on the Board of Directors and Committees with the committee and will contact Ms. Nettrour and Mr. Jackson regarding their committee membership status.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Burmeister adjourned the meeting.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next teleconference is scheduled for November 20, 2001.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**ACTION ITEMS  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 6, 2001**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1	Uniform electronic reporting format	Ongoing
2	Ms. Burmeister will email the Analyte and Method Code SOP for duplication and inclusion in the NELAC 7i participant packet..	11/19/01
3	Ms. Burmeister will email Reenie Parris asking her to encourage the PT providers to use the new method codes.	11/20/01
4	Ms. Haynes will poll the NELAP AA's during their committee teleconference today regarding analyte groups.	11/20/01
5	Ms. Burmeister will email a reminder to PT providers regarding data for analytes with problematic acceptance criteria.	ASAP
6	Ms. Burmeister will contact Ms. Cindy Nettrour and Mr. Larry Jackson regarding continuing membership on the committee.	11/20/01

**PARTICIPANTS  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 6, 2001**

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